



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE WAKEFIELD GROUP IN TOWNELEY

The characteristics as to style and meter of the plays assigned to the Wakefield group in Towneley have often been noted,<sup>1</sup> but there has been no attempt carefully to set the bounds of the work of the man who wrote them, or put in convenient form the chief characteristics which make them distinctive. It is such a discussion that I have set myself in this paper. It will have served its purpose, if it succeeds in presenting a clearer view than has been had before of the characteristics of this author's style and of his methods of work.

Generally stated the characteristics of his style may be said to be its humor, its superior dramatic form, and its peculiar meter. These things are so well defined, that when found together they enable us to assign certain plays and portions of plays to him without hesitation. But there are some plays possessing this markedly humorous and dramatic quality, but not written in the characteristic meter; and there are certain stanzas, too few in number to exhibit any marked peculiarities in style, which seem to be corruptions of the usual stanza. In order, therefore, to be able to set the bounds of his work it is necessary to consider these two characteristics: first, the metrical form, in order to obtain criteria for determining the authorship of these doubtful stanzas; and second, the style of the plays known to belong to the group, in order to determine whether those plays which are humorous and highly dramatic in quality, but not in the usual meter, may not be, at least in part, the work of the same editor.

The most obvious characteristic of his work is its metrical form. In fact this peculiar meter is so uniformly present in plays possessing the other characteristics of the W author that it is safe to assign it, wherever found, to his hand. It forms a sufficient test of his work and enables us to say definitely that all of plays 3, 12, 13, 16, 23; scenes in 20, 22, and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. W. Pollard, *Introduction to E. E. T. S. edition of the Towneley Plays*. Hohlfield, *Die Altenglischen Kollektivmysterien*, Anglia, vol. xi, 219 ff. etc.

30; and isolated stanzas in 2, 23, 27, and 29 are by the W author.

The stanza rhymes in *ababababcccc*. The *a* rhyme is usually internal, though there are a few exceptions to that form. These are found in play 2, st. 35, 36; pl. 23, st. 2; pl. 27, st. 30; as well as in certain seemingly corrupt stanzas, which are to be discussed immediately. The *c* rhymes are mere tags.

The scansion of this stanza is not an easy matter. There is much apparent variation both in the number of feet in a line and in the number of syllables in each foot. But the basic stanza seems to have been one with two accented and two unaccented syllables to the half line, the accent coming on the final syllable of each foot. There is, however, a tendency to increase the number of unaccented syllables, so that it is hardly possible to find a stanza absolutely typical of the basic form. I, therefore, illustrate it by a stanza chosen at random from play 12. It is the fourth stanza of the play.

My hándys may I wrýng / and mówrnyng máke,  
Bot if goód will sprýng / the cóuntre forsáke;  
ffermes thýk ar comýng / my púrs is bot wáke,  
I haue nérehand nothýng / to páy nor to táke;

I may sýng  
With púrs pannelés  
That makys thís heuynés  
Wo is mé this dystrés  
And hás no helpíng.

The scansion of this stanza evidently calls for two accented syllables in every half line, but there are a number of feet which contain two unaccented syllables.

This tendency to increase the number of unaccented syllables is characteristic of the author. I quote as illustrative a stanza from that part of play 22 which is undoubtedly his work.

Play 22, st. 5.

*primus tortor.* I haue rón that I swétt / from sir hérode  
oure kýng  
With this mán that will not létt / oure láwes to downe  
brýng;  
he has dóne so mych forfétt / of cáre may he sýng;

Through dóm of sir pyláte he géttys / an ýll endýng  
 And sóre;  
 The great wárkys he has wróght  
 Shall sérue hym of nóght,  
 And bot tháy be dere bóght,  
 léfe me no móre.

In this stanza feet with only one unaccented syllable are few, the majority having two or even three unaccented.<sup>4</sup> So far is this fondness for unaccented syllables carried, that it is possible to scan many of the verses with more than two feet to the verse. I give as an example another stanza, 18, from this same play, 22, scanning it first upon the two accent basis, with numerous unaccented syllables, and then upon a basis of four accents.

Play 22, st. 18. Two accents to the half line:

*iii tortor.* Sirs, as he cáme from ihericó / a blynde man  
 sátt by the wáy;  
 To hym walkánd with many mó / cryand to hým thus can  
 he sáy,  
 “Thou son of dáuid, or thou gó / of blyndnes héle thou me  
 this dáy.”  
 Ther was he hélyd of all his wó / sich wonders cán he  
 wyrk all wáy  
 At wýll;  
 he rasys mén from deth to lýfe,  
 And castys out dévylys from thame oft sýthe,  
 seke men cáme to hym full rýfe,  
 He helys thaym óf all ýll.

Four accents to the half line:

*iii tortor.* Sirs, ás he cáme from ihericó / a blýnde man  
 sátt by the wáy;  
 To hým walkánd with mány mó / cryánd to hým thus cán  
 he sáy,  
 “Thou són of dáuid, ór thou gó / of blýndnes héle thou mé  
 this dáy.”  
 Ther wás he hélyd of áll his wó / sich wónders cán he  
 wýrk all wáy  
 At wýll;  
 he rásys mén from déth to lýfe,

And cástys out dévylys from tháme oft sýthe,  
séke men cáme to hým full rýfe,  
He hélys thaym óf all ýll.

This illustration simply shows how easily the stanza could become corrupt by the addition of unaccented syllables.

As a matter of fact, when this trick of adding unaccented syllables is once learned, it becomes the simplest matter in the world to extend the lines unnaturally and so distort the form of the stanza until it is hardly recognizable. This the W author seems to have done in some cases. But further discussion along this line must be post-poned until a second standard for judging the authorship of the stanzas has been noticed: that is the use of alliteration.

The W author makes very little use of alliteration. The great mass of the stanzas is, like that just quoted, without it. In others its use is seemingly accidental, as in the first and second stanzas quoted. But sometimes, when a serious or solemn effect was desired, its use appears to have been intentional. Such are the speeches of the shepherds when they worship the child.

Play 13, st. 80. *primus pastor*:

hayll, comly and clene / hayll, yong child!  
hayll, maker, as I meyne / of a madyn so mylde!  
Thou has waryd, I weyne / the warlo so wylde;  
The fals gyler of teyn / now goys he begylde.  
lo, he merys;  
lo, he laghys, my swetyng,  
A welfare metyng,  
I haue holden my ketyng;  
haue a bob of cherys.

St. 81. *i. ius pastor*.

hayll, sufferan sauyoure! / ffor thou has vs soght:  
hayll, frely foyde and floure / that all thyng has wroght!  
hayll, full of fauoure / that made all of noght!  
hayll! I kneyll and I cowre. / A byrd haue I broght,  
To my barne.  
hayll, lytyll tyne mop!  
of oure crede thou art crop:  
I wold drynk on thy cop,  
Lytyll day starne.

Here there seems to be an effort to increase, by the use of alliteration, the effect of solemnity in the simple worship of the shepherd. This alliteration is sometimes, as in line 1 of each stanza, confined to a half line: in other verses, as in line 2 of stanza 80, it extends through both halves of the line; and in lines 2 and 4 of stanza 81 it differs in each half line.

In other places much use is made of alliteration to add to the bombastic effect of the speeches of Herod and Pilate, or of their heralds. Such are the stanzas in the Nuncio's speech in play 16, where he is lauding Herod. I quote stanza 1.

Play 16, st. 1. *Nuncius*:

Moste myghty mahowne / meng you with mirth!  
Both of burgh and of towne / by fellys and by fyrth,  
Both kyng with crowne / and barons of brith,  
That radly wyll rowne / many greatt grith  
Shall be happ.  
Take tenderly intent  
what sondys ar sent,  
Else harmes shall ye hent,  
And lothes you to lap.

This use of alliteration continues through the first nine stanzas to the close of the Nuncio's speech. Then Herod begins in a vaunting strain; but with what appears to be an intentional avoidance of alliteration.

It is possible, then, to define the nature of the Wakefield stanza by saying: That the favorite metrical form of its author was a stanza rhyming *ababababcdddc*. This stanza normally had two feet to a half line; but this normal form was often much disguised by the addition of unaccented syllables; thus making possible verse forms containing more than the usual two feet. The writer made little use of alliteration, except when he wished to add to an effect of solemnity, or make a vaunting speech more bombastic in tone. When he did use alliteration he was much more apt to confine it to half lines than to extend over a whole verse.

The stanzas which seem to be corruptions of this W stanza are found in play 20, st. 97-102; play 24, st. 6-9; play 27, st. 57. In play 20 the stanzas show a tendency to break up into quatrains. This is accompanied by alliteration and a length-

ening of the lines. But these changes are not found in all the stanzas in the group. It has already been shown by illustrations drawn from play 22, that the W stanza was often capable of being spoken with four accents to the half line. Although all the stanzas in play 20 are written with the *a* rhyme as an end rhyme, it is possible to show that st. 97, at least, is a good example of this four accent stanza. I compare it with play 22, st. 16, which I write without internal rhyme.

Pl. 20, st. 97. <i>Malcues Miles</i> :	Play 22, st. 16.
Sir, this Ioarnáy I vndertáke	Syrs, át the fféste of archítreclyñ
with áll my mýght and máyn.	this próphete he wás;
I'f I shúld, for máhowns sáke,	Ther túrnyd he wáter ínto wýn
here ín this pláce be sláyn,	that dáy he hád sich gráce,
Críst that próphett fór to táke,	his apóstles tó hym cán enclýn
we máy be áll full fáyn.	and óther thát ther wás;
Oure wéppyns rédy lóke ye máke	The sée he pást bot féw yeres
tó bryng hým in mékyll gráme	sýn
This nýght.	it léte hym wálk thereón apáse
Go we nów on oure wáy,	At wýll;
oure mástres fór to máy;	The éleméntys áll bydéyn,
Oure lántarnes táke with ús	And wýndes thát ár so kéyn,
alswáy,	The firmaménte, as I wéyn,
And lóke that tháy be líght!	Ar hým obéyng týll.

While there is irregularity in both stanzas, it is evident that, taken by themselves they would be considered representatives of the same metrical structure. That this is also true of stanza 100, play 20 comes out when it is compared with stanza 19 of play 22.

Pl. 20, st. 100. <i>primus miles</i> :	Pl. 22, st. 19. <i>primus tortor</i> ,
That bóyn, lord, thóu vs béde,	ffor áll thise dédys of greát
and ón hym wréke the sóne we	louýng
sháll;	fower thýngys I háue fond cér-
ffro wé haue láde on hým good	tanlý,
spéde;	ffor whích he ís worthý to hýng:
he sháll no hóre hym gódys	oone ís oure kýng thát hé wold
son cáll.	bé.
we sháll marke hým trulý his	Oure sábbot dáy in hís wyrkýng
méde;	hé, lettys nót to héle the séke

by mahówne most, gód of áll,	trulý ;
Síche thre knýghtys had lýtyll	he sáys oure témphe he sháll
dréde	downe brýng
To býnde the dwíll that wé on	and ín thre dáies byg ít in hý
cáll	All hóle agáne ;
In néde ;	Syr piláte, as ye sýtt,
ffor íf thay wére a thówsand	looke wýsely ín youre wýtt ;
mó,	Dam íhesú or ye flýtt
that próphete ánd his apóstels	On crósse to súffre his páyne.
alsó	
with thíse two hándys for to	
sló,	
had I lytyll dréde.	

Here, too, the evident similarity in form proves the doubtful stanza to belong to the Wakefield Group. But in connection with these two undoubted Wakefield stanzas are two others written as four (98, 99 ; 101, 102) in the text, which are here given side by side.

**St. 98. *Secundus Miles:***

Sir piláte, prynce péreles in páll,  
of áll men most mýghty mérked  
on móld,  
we ar éuer more rédy to cóm at  
thi cáll,  
and bów to thi býdyng as bách-  
lers shóld.

99. Bot that prýnce of the após-  
tyls púpplyshed befórne,  
Men cáll hym críst, comen of  
dáuid kýn,  
his lýfe full sóne shalbé forlórne,  
If wé haue háp hym fórtó wýn.  
haue dóne !

ffór, as éuer éte I bréede,  
or I stýr in this stéde  
I wold strýke off his héde ;  
lord, I áske that bóyne.

**101. *Pilatus:***

Now, cúrtes kásers óf kámys kýn  
most géntyll of Iúre to mé that  
I fýnde,  
My cómforth from cáre may yé  
sone wýn,  
if ye háppely may hént that un-  
héynde.

102. Bot gó ye héns spédely and  
lóke ye not spáre ;  
My frénship, my fórtherans,  
shall éuer with you bé ;  
And mahówne that is mýghfull  
he ménske you euermáre !  
Bryng yóu safe and sównde  
with that bródel to me !

In pláce  
wher so éuer ye wéynd,  
ye knýghtys so héynde,  
Sir lúcyfer the féynde  
he léde you the tráce !



Since these stanzas are both found in such close connection with the other two undoubted W stanzas, one would also be apt to consider them W stanzas, were it not for two very obvious objections to this view. These are, first, that there is a change in the rhyme scheme after the fourth line, which marks the first four lines in each stanza as a single quatrain; and, second, that the single quatrain stanza 98 and the quatrain in st. 102 have lines which are considerably longer than the rest. But these objections are easily overcome. To consider the last first: the tendency to lengthen the line has already been noted. These stanzas but carry it a step farther than the other examples given by introducing two unaccented syllables instead of one in each foot of a four accent half line, here written more correctly as a verse by itself. Such feet are found in the first six lines of st. 98-99 and in all of the lines in the quatrain portion of stanza 101-102 except the first.

The change in the rhyme scheme by which quatrains are developed may be as easily explained. There is abundant evidence that a quatrain editor has been at work on the Towneley plays, especially on that group of the plays which were directly borrowed from York.<sup>2</sup> Quatrains are plentiful in play 20, part of which is a York borrowing. We are justified in thinking that this editor has been at work here. In this particular case the change in rhyme breaks each W stanza into a single quatrain and a single quatrain plus the W cauda. If the cauda were dropped or changed into a quatrain the result would be a succession of single quatrains. This final stage seems to be illustrated by the four stanzas just preceding stanza 97.

St. 93, *Iudas*:

Ordán ye knýghtys to wéynd with mé,  
Ríchly aráyd in réwyll and rówtt;  
And áll my cóuandys hólđen shall bé,  
Só I haue félyship mé abówte.

St. 94. *Pilatus*:

wherbý, Iudás, shuld wé hym knáw,

<sup>2</sup> On the York Group see *The York Mystery Plays*, Miss L. Toulmin Smith; E. E. T. S. edition of *The Towneley Plays*, Introduction; *Anglia*, vol. xi, 219 ff.; Davidson, *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*, pp. 137-157.

If wé shall wýsely wýrk, Iwýs?  
ffor sóm of v's hym néuer sáw.

*Iudas*: lay hánd on hým that I' shall kýs.

*St. 95 Pilatus*:

haue dóne, sir knýghtys, and kýthe youre stréngthe.  
And wáp you wíghtly ín youre wéde;  
Seke óuer áll, both bréde and léngthe!  
Spáre ye nót, spénde and spéde!

*St. 96.*

Wé have sóght hym lés and móre,  
And fályd ther wé haue fárn;  
Málcus, thóu shall wéynd befóre,  
And bére with thé a líght lantárne.

These four stanzas agree very well with 98 and 101 in meter. There is nothing about them to indicate that they are not a revision of the old W stanza by the quatrain editor, and, in connection with the stanzas already considered, there is much to support that view. In fact we are probably safe in considering all this scene a revision of an older Wakefield scene.

This lengthy discussion of the doubtful stanzas in play 20 has been made necessary by the importance of the indications which it gives that certain accepted conclusions concerning the growth of this cycle may be erroneous. As I have indicated in a previous article,<sup>3</sup> scholars have been accustomed to divide the plays composing the Towneley Cycle into three groups<sup>4</sup> according to the order in which the plays are supposed to have been added to the cycle. According to this division the York group is the second, and the Wakefield the third, while the first is composed of a number of plays of a simple religious nature and written in a simple meter, which from their form seem to be the most archaic portion of the cycle. Through all the cycle run couplets and quatrains which are evidently the work of editors.<sup>5</sup> But on examination of these couplets and quatrains it is discovered that the York group contains no couplets while all the groups contain quatrains. This evidently makes it necessary to conclude that the York

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, X, No. 4, p. 572 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *The Towneley Plays*, E. E. T. S., pp. xxvi ff.

<sup>5</sup> Davidson, p. 129.

group was the last added to the cycle. The quatrains here found in connection with the Wakefield stanzas are part of the evidence for proving the old order wrong.

We have seen in connection with the worship of the shepherds, that the author of the Wakefield scenes makes use of alliteration in passages to which he wishes to give a solemn or serious effect, and we have found in the speech of Nuncius, play 16, st. 1-10, a similar use of alliteration where he wishes to give a bombastic effect. In these cases it was found that the alliteration was more commonly confined to what was really the half line as generally written. There was also found, especially in play 22, a tendency to lengthen each verse by the addition of unaccented syllables. In the first four stanzas of play 22, where Pilate makes a bombastic speech, these two tendencies are carried much further. There is little regularity in the alliteration and little limit to the length of a line, with considerable confusion metrically. I quote stanza 3.

Bot this próphete, that has préchyd and púplyshed so pláyn  
Cristen lów, crist thay cáll hym in óure cuntré;  
Bot oure prýnces full prówdly this nýght haue hym táyn,  
    ffull týatt to be dámpned he shall be húrlyd byfore mé;  
I shall fównde to be his fréynd vtwárd, in certáyn,  
    And shéw hym fare cówntenance and wórdys of vantyé;  
Bot or this day at nýght on crósse shall he be sláyn,  
    Thus agáns hym in my hárt I bere gréat enmyté  
        ffull sóre.  
        ye mén that vse bák-bytýngys,  
        and rásars of slánderýngys,  
        ye ár my dére darlýngys,  
        And máhowns for éuermóre.

These stanzas simply carry out the tendency, heretofore noted, to increase the number of unaccented syllables. They are on a basis of two accents to the half line, but can more easily be read with four accents. The number of unaccented syllables in each foot is much increased, so that even when scanned with four accents they vary from one to three in each foot. (See the last foot of line 2 and the third in line 4). The rhyme scheme is that of the W group and these four stanzas, to which Pilate's bombastic speech is confined, are followed

by the regular Wakefield form, which continues throughout the first scene of the play. So it is probable that all were written by the W author, but that he enlarged these to heighten the bombastic effect.

Again, in play 24 there are four stanzas, 6, 7, 8, 9, which are a probable corruption of the same meter. They have been divided differently in the E. E. T. S. edition and that leads to some confusion. On inspection, however, it becomes evident that st. 6 and 7 are practically the same in structure as st. 98, 99 of play 20. The usual W pedes is, as there, broken into two quatrains, to which the usual cauda is attached. Here, also, the first quatrain has much longer verses than the second. In fact they are the longest so far found, as they can be scanned with six feet; but this is accounted for by the theory of growth in length through the addition of unaccented syllables. The second quatrain is more nearly the usual length.

Stanza 6.

loke thát no bóy be to bústus, blást here fór to bláw,  
 Bot trúly tó my tálkyng loke thát ye bé inténdyng;  
 If hére be ány bóy that wíll not louútt till oure láw,  
 By mýghty mahówne, high sháll he hýng;  
     South, nóρθ, eest, wést,  
     In áll this wárlđ in léngthe and bréde,  
     Is nóne so dóughty as I', the bést,  
     dóughtely dýntand on múle and on stéde.

Stanza 7.

Therfór I sáy,  
 loke thát ye lówte to mý lykánce,  
 ffor dówte of dýnt in greuánce;  
 dilygéntly plý to mý plesánce,  
 As prýnce most mýghty me páy.

St. 8 is the usual cauda and is followed by st. 9, a pedes similar to st. 6. St. 9 has no cauda. These all appear to be corruptions of the usual Wakefield stanza, five of which precede them. The nine contain the bombastic speech by Pilate, which opens the play.

The 57th stanza of Play 29 is similar to st. 98, 99, 101, 102 of play 20 in one respect. It shows a tendency to divide into

quatrains, but this is not so marked as in the stanzas in play 20. There the rhyme scheme is (98) *abab* (99) *cdcd efffe*; that is, the quatrain of 99 shows a complete new set of rhymes. In the stanza in play 29 the rhyme scheme is *ababbcbcddeed*; that is, the *b* rhyme of the first quatrain becomes the *a* rhyme of the second. The stanza is doubtless an editing of a W stanza, for it is followed by such a stanza and the two are preceded and followed by quatrains.

Of the characteristics of style, the first to be noticed is the great freedom in the use of the biblical source. It is a general characteristic of the Mystery Plays that they follow biblical authority closely, many of them being not much more than amplified metrical translations of the scriptures. But in nearly every case this W editor, taking the scripture story as a basis, has allowed free rein to his imagination, showing considerable skill in the development both of plot and character. Examples are plenty. Note the development of the story of Noah (pl. 2); of the Innocents (pl. 16); of the trial scenes (pl. 21 and 22), etc. Conspicuous in this respect is the second shepherds' play (play 13), in which he makes use of a legend, probably well known to the shepherds of the vicinity,<sup>6</sup> and succeeds in creating the only Mystery Play with anything like a well-developed plot. It is the story of Mak and the Shepherds. Three shepherds meet on the heath and complain of their ill-fortune. Mak comes up and enters into conversation. The weary shepherds lie down to sleep when Mak throws a spell around them and, as he says, "borrows" a sheep and goes home. His wife upbraids him for stealing the sheep, but finally consents to help conceal it. They put it in the crib, determined to pass it off on the shepherds as their newborn child. This ruse nearly succeeds; but one of the shepherds returns to give the child sixpence and the sheep is discovered. The shepherds punish Mak by tossing him in a blanket and then on the Angel's summons they go to Bethlehem to worship the Christ Child. The author has made the entirely non-biblical story of Mak the kernel of the play.

Closely connected with his ability to construct scenes upon the slenderest biblical source was the power he had to present

<sup>6</sup> *The Towneley Plays*, E. E. T. S. Introduction pp. xxxi-xxxiv.

vividly the life of his time. In the first shepherd's play, he describes the shepherds feasting on the heath, giving in great detail a scene which must have been vividly real to his audiences and garnishing the whole with a sharp relish of humor and satire upon the evils of the day, the oppression by the landlords, and the difficulties of a shepherd's life. But his satirical vein is best illustrated in the character of Tutivillus in the play on the Judgment, Pl. 30. Tutivillus is the devil's chief officer and has hunted many thousands of souls for his master. He knows them all, tells over their natures with great attention to detail, and joins gleefully in driving the condemned souls to hell, taunting them as he goes with their sins. Other characteristic satires on the times are found in the Shepherd Plays. I quote, as example, the opening speech of play 13:—

*Primus Pastor:*

Lord, what these weders ar cold / and I am yll happyd;  
 I am nere hande dold / so long haue I nappyd;  
 My legys thay fold / my fyngers ar chappyd,  
 It is not as I wold / for I am al lappyd

In sorow.

In stormes and tempest,  
 Now in the eest, now in the west,  
 wo is hym has neuer rest

Myd day nor morow!

Bot we sely shepardes / that walkys on the moore,  
 In fayth we are nere handys / outt of the doore;  
 No wonder as it standys / if we be poore,  
 ffor the tylthe of our landys / lyys falow as the floore,

As ye ken.

we are so hamyd,  
 ffor-taxed and ramyd,  
 We are mayde hand tamyd,  
 with thyse gentlery men.

After two stanzas detailing the exactions of the gentry he closes as follows:

Ther shall com a swane / as prowde as a po,  
 he must borow my wane / my ploghe also,  
 Then I am full fane / tograunt or he go.

Thus lyf we in payne / Anger, and wo,  
By night and day;  
he must haue if he langyd,  
If I shuld forgang it,  
I were better be hangyd  
Then oones say hym nay.

It dos me good, as I walk / thus by myn oone,  
Of this world for to talk / in maner of mone.  
To my shepe wyll I stalk / and herkyn anone,  
Ther abyde on a balk / or sytt on a stone

ffull soyne.  
ffor I trowe, perde,  
trew men if thay be,  
we gett more compane  
Or it be noyne.

And the second shepherd enters.

In connection with this vivid presentation of the life of the times the author makes use of local references which have helped to identify the locality of the plays. Both Pollard <sup>7</sup> in his introduction, and Peacock, <sup>8</sup> note the reference to Horbury and to the crooked thorne in play 13 (first, lines 454-7; second, line 403), and Peacock shows that the situation of the places, close to Wakefield, is evidence that the plays were given in Wakefield itself. As these, with one exception, and that, as will be shown, <sup>9</sup> probably in a Wakefield play, are the only references to Wakefield that are at all definite, I have taken them as an indication that this group, at least, was written at that town.<sup>10</sup>

But the chief characteristic of the W plays is their highly developed dramatic power. This has been noticed in discussing those characteristics already mentioned. The most conspicuous example is the story of Mak. In delineation of character and ability to sustain the interest the W author is far ahead of any other editor or author of Mystery Plays.

<sup>7</sup> *The Towneley Plays*. Introduction, pp. xiii, xiv.

<sup>8</sup> *Anglia*, vol. xxiv, 518.

<sup>9</sup> See below, page 258.

<sup>10</sup> See above, page 1, footnote 1.

The plays and scenes which may be definitely assigned to the W group have already been noted; and it has been shown that certain corrupt stanzas are doubtless the same man's work. Besides these there are two plays, play 2 and play 24, in which identity of meter is lacking, but which in other particulars seem to agree more closely with the work of the Wakefield editor than with that of any other.

Play 2 is conspicuous because of its deviation from the biblical source in the introduction of Cain's plough boy, Garcio, who acts the part of clown. He is conceived quite after the manner of the W editor. He enters the scene with considerable bluster and shows a wholly unpardonable lack of reverence for his master, Cain, which reaches its climax after the murder of Abel. Cain pretends to have received a warrant from the king absolving himself and Garcio from punishment for the death of Abel. This he reads through, each sentence interrupted by irreverent and sarcastic remarks on the part of the plough boy, the purport of which is that he cares nothing for such a pardon, what he wants is to have Cain give him plenty to eat and drink. Cain finally has to give up his reading in anger. In addition to this, Cain gives long and humorous, but irreverent, replies to the pleading of Abel and succeeds in turning this biblical tragedy into something of a farce. It is this play which also contains the only direct reference to Wakefield, or its vicinity, outside of the 13th play. Cain, having killed Abel, says he will hide and gives the following directions:

Lines 362-367.

And where so any man may find me,  
 Let hym slo me hardely;  
 And where so any man may me meyte,  
 Ayther bi sty, or yit bi strete;  
 And hardely, when I am dede,  
 bery me in gudeboure at the quarell hede.

"Here," says Peacock,<sup>11</sup> "we have so plain a reference to Wakefield that it is surprising to find no explanation of it either in the edition of the Surtees Society, or in the more recent one of the Early English Text Society." He then pro-

<sup>11</sup> *Anglia*, xxiv, pp. 516, 517.



ceeds to show that Goody Bower was a well known locality in Wakefield and that it might well have been the scene of the acting of the plays themselves. "No more fitting place in Wakefield could have been found. Within a stone's throw of the Church and close to Wakefield Green, it was entirely surrounded by fields and gardens up to the 17th century, and would serve exactly the same purpose as is served by the meadow at Ober-Ammergau, where the plays are now acted."

Coupled with the fact that the peculiar humorous and dramatic character of the play makes it extremely probable that it was written by the W editor, although only the last two stanzas are in the W meter, this very evident reference to Wakefield but increases the probability that the author of play 13 was also the author of play 2. In regard to this Pollard remarks:<sup>12</sup> "The extraordinary boldness of the play, and the character of its humor, makes it difficult to dissociate it from the work of the author of the shepherds' plays, and I cannot doubt that this also, at least in part, must be added to his credit."

Hohlfeld,<sup>13</sup> it is true, does not go so far, thinking that play 2 should be distinguished from others of a humorous nature because of its greater coarseness. His point is to a certain extent well taken. The play is the coarsest of those which have been suggested as the work of the W editor. But, on the other hand, it is just as true that the scene between Cain and Garcio, when Cain attempts to read the king's proclamation is worthy of the author who wrote the second shepherds' play. It shows considerably more skill in construction than do the usual humorous scenes in the usual cycle. There are many indications that the W editor often re-wrote older plays. In fact his usual method was to re-write on an older framework. Here there is nothing to indicate a change in his habits of work; but the evident discrepancy in humorous quality does indicate that he added his better scenes to an older play, developing the characters of Cain and Garcio in his own way. Furthermore, the original stanza of this play is not that of the W group, though there are two W stanzas

<sup>12</sup> *The Towneley Plays*. E. E. T. S. Introduction, p. xxii.

<sup>13</sup> *Anglia*, xi, page 309.

at the end. In addition the play has very evidently been edited in couplets after the insertion of the humorous scenes. It is probable that the W editor re-wrote on the basis of the original stanza, perhaps adding two in his own meter at the end. How many more are hidden in the long sections of couplets, it is impossible to say.

Play 24 bears evidence similar to the above that it has been worked over by the W editor. In the first place the opening and closing stanzas are in the characteristic meter. Again, the dependence upon biblical or apocryphal sources is of the very slightest nature: the account of the casting lots for the garments of Christ in Matt. xxvii, 35; Mark xv, 24; Luke xxiii, 34; John xix, 23-24; and the reference in the *Mors Pilati*, which describes Pilate appearing before Tiberius in Christ's tunic, *Gesta Pilati* A x, i; B x, 3; and Latin x, 1.<sup>14</sup> The play has the characteristically humorous tone of the W group. The whole is in the nature of a farce. The torturers, after casting lots, run separately to Pilate, each claiming for himself the seamless tunic, but afraid that Pilate will claim it for himself. He fulfills their expectations in this regard and various propositions are made as to the method of division. Finally they decide to throw dice. Pilate loses, is very angry, and asks the coat as a favor. The one who won it gives it up and all with repeated oaths forswear the use of dice. The various situations are well worked out. The climax comes naturally and is only spoiled by the moral lecture at the end, contained in the forswearing. The characters are developed more fully than is usually the case outside of the W group, especially that of Pilate. He stands out as a good type of the petulant ruler, who cannot stand the thwarting of his slightest wish. Thus the author has made the play an occasion for his favorite satire against those in high places. In discussing the connection between this play and the W group, both Pollard<sup>15</sup> and Hohlfeld<sup>16</sup> include it among the group. It is probably a re-writing of an older play as is play 2. There are a number of stanzas, in a simple *aaabcccb* meter, which

<sup>14</sup> Tischendorf, ed. 1853, p. 434. (from *Anglia* xi, p. 300).

<sup>15</sup> *The Towneley Plays*, E. E. T. S. Introduction, p. xxii.

<sup>16</sup> *Anglia* xi, p. 309.

are spoken by each torturer as he comes on the stage. Upon these the scene between the three and Pilate seems to have been grafted, as it is in a different meter and much more characteristic of the W author than what precedes.

It thus becomes evident that the limits of the W author's work are not rigidly defined by his peculiar stanza, since certain plays in different meters must be assigned to him, and since in certain cases he has apparently deviated from the rigid metrical type in which most of his plays are written. We must, therefore, include as his work, besides the plays in his usual stanza, Plays 2 and 24; stanzas 97-102, pl. 20; the first four stanzas of 22; the stanzas 6-9 of 24; with certain isolated stanzas in other plays. The fact that st. 97-102, pl. 20 must be considered his is one evidence that the W group was added to the cycle before the York group, since they bear evidence of quatrains characteristic of that group. On the other hand these plays are not the oldest part of the cycle, because there is evidence, in certain cases, that the W editor has simply re-written older plays.

In this connection a few observations concerning the methods of this highly original editor may be of interest. The evolution of the highly organized Mystery plays out of the liturgy, has been traced in general by Mr. E. K. Chambers.<sup>17</sup> From his conclusions it would seem to follow that the present condition of the cycles has arisen from a process very similar to that collaboration with which we are familiar in the earlier of Shakespeare's plays. Editors have been in the main, first translators from the Latin and then elaborators and re-writers of old scenes. They have not so much ventured to insert new scenes as to enlarge, compress, or shift old ones. Evidence that this was the method of the Wakefield author is plentiful. In fact much of his success seems to have arisen from the very skillful way in which he re-wrote old plays. In play 13, for instance, he simply incorporated into the Shepherd scene, common to all the cycles from the earliest times, a legend of the country side, which he succeeded in cleverly dramatizing. In addition plays 16, 20, and 30, as well as 2 and 24 appear to be based on older plays already present in the cycle. I have

<sup>17</sup> *The Mediaeval Stage*, E. K. Chambers, vol. 2.

already pointed out that he has added certain isolated stanzas to older plays: such are pl. 23, st. 2 and 57; pl. 27, st. 4 and 30. Besides these there might be noted st. 16, 57, 58 of play 29. It has also been remarked that the two final stanzas in play 2 can be taken as evidence that the W editor wrote that play, or at least worked it over.

It thus becomes evident that, while the method of this editor is of interest because it is typical of the usual method in editing Mystery plays, his work is significant because through the medium of this usual method he added to the Mystery plays those scenes which show the highest development of dramatic power within the cycles.

Professor Gayley<sup>18</sup> considers him to be much indebted to the school of cyclic writers which flourished at York. There are affinities of style upon which this theory of indebtedness can be based. Professor Gayley also finds affinities in metrical form. But metrical affinities must, it seems to me, be largely hypothetical. They seem to have been suggested by the fact that work of the Wakefield editor is often found in close contiguity with borrowings from York, and by the fact that it is commonly believed that the Wakefield editor's work followed the insertion of these borrowings from York into the Towneley cycle. I have elsewhere suggested<sup>19</sup> that an examination of the editorial couplets and quatrains in Towneley reveals that this chronology is hardly possible. It seems rather, to be reasonable to give this editor full credit for his originality both in thought and execution since he has given us in the second *Shepherds' play* the first bit of true comic plot and in the *plough-boy Garcio* the first human low comic character in the English drama.

FRANK W. CADY.

*Middlebury College.*

<sup>18</sup> *Representative English Comedies*, Introduction, pp. xxiv-xxix.

<sup>19</sup> *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, X No. 4, page 572 ff.